



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

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For Immediate Release

Healthy Diet and Regular Exercise May Prevent Diabetes
November is National Diabetes Month

(MADISON, November 14, 2005)—The Department of Health and Family Services urges people to maintain a healthy diet and exercise on a regular basis in order to prevent and control diabetes.

"The best way to prevent diabetes is to eat right and be active," said Dr. Sheri Johnson, State Health Officer. "More than 329,000 Wisconsin adults have diabetes and many of them - close to 94,000 - don't even know that they have the disease."

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin that is needed to convert food into energy for your body. Diabetes carries an increased risk for heart attack, stroke, and complications related to poor circulation. Left untreated, diabetes can cause blindness, skin and foot problems, kidney disease and even death.

People at risk of developing diabetes include: older people, overweight or obese people, people with a sedentary lifestyle, minority populations, and people with a family history of diabetes. Native American and African American adults in Wisconsin have the highest death rates due to diabetes, with Asian American adults having the lowest diabetes death rate.

At risk people should make the following lifestyle changes to reduce the chances of developing diabetes, including:

- Regular physical activity (e.g., walking) for 30 minutes per day for five or more days each week
- Aim for a moderate weight loss of 5-7% of your body weight.
- Maintain a healthy diet.
- Control blood pressure and cholesterol.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Wisconsin also have pre-diabetes, a condition where a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. People who have pre-diabetes should include healthier foods in their diet and become more physically active in order to delay or prevent their condition from becoming full-blown diabetes.

The direct cost for medical care of diabetes in Wisconsin is estimated at \$3.17 billion and the indirect costs, including lost workdays, restricted activity days, permanent disabilities and death, are estimated at \$1.35 billion.

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"An investment in a healthier lifestyle now can improve the quality of life for individuals, and reduce health care costs for society at large," said Dr. Johnson.

If you have diabetes, make it a priority to take good care of your body. By paying attention now to eye care, foot and skin care, as well as your heart health and oral health, you could delay or prevent the onset of dangerous diabetes complications later in life.

Some basic things to consider if you have diabetes:

- Keep your blood sugar levels under tight control
- Try to eat foods high in fiber and low in fat
- Limit alcoholic beverages
- Don't smoke
- Keep skin clean and dry
- Check your feet every day for sores and cuts and always wear socks and shoes that fit well
- See your eye care professional at least once a year for a dilated eye exam
- Remember to properly brush your teeth twice a day, and don't forget to floss

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services' Diabetes Prevention and Control Program is dedicated to improving the health of people with or at risk of developing diabetes. To learn more about diabetes prevention and control efforts in Wisconsin, visit <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/diabetes/>

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